

Thinking with God

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Proverbs 23:7 says that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. So many of the problems we struggle with are intensified because we simply do not know how to think with God.

In one European nation, people are showing an increasing tendency toward depression and alcoholism. This is a country where, though people pay high taxes, they are afforded almost total social security in return. The unemployed are well taken care of, so they do not feel the brunt of any economic slumps. The cities as well as the countryside are extremely clean. Still, with all of their natural and financial resources, sociologists and psychologists are spending hours studying this trend of unhappiness among the people there.

The problem is wrong thinking. Their views of success are not framed according to truth from the Word of God.

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the

Word of God stands forever (Isaiah 40:8). Real success only comes when one learns how to think with God.

This booklet examines the believer's need to guard his heart and mind by consistently receiving the Word of God into the perceptive area of his mind. From there, it can be transferred by the power of the Holy Spirit through the human spirit and into the soul, bringing the mind of Christ into every detail. In these pages, we will look at the power of reception and perception in combating the attacks of the enemy as we learn to think with God.

Chapter One
READINESS OF MIND

“Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:

“But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, where-with I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

“And having in a readiness to revenge all

disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Corinthians 10:1-6).

“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

“I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

“Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

“Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

“For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

“Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

“But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which

were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:10-19).

That's Your Problem

Many people have a problem with their thinking. First of all, many of us just don't know how to think right, having thoughts based in the Word of God (see Philippians 4:8). Secondly, after the problem of wrong thinking, many have trouble in the processes of thinking.

In 2 Corinthians 10, Paul draws an illustration from the great fortresses that were constructed in his day. Almost every one of these structures featured a tremendous tower, a gate, or a bridge. When it was convenient, the enemy would attempt to get across the bridge and go through to the inside. At other times, they would charge up a hill and try to assault the tower. The enemy would do everything they could to overcome the physical challenges of the fortress. Their warfare was physical.

The apostle Paul describes how Satan, our accuser and enemy, does all he can to attack our thought life with weapons that are not physical.

Paul says, "There is one thing I want to make clear. One of the greatest problems that you will ever have on earth is with your thoughts." His contention is that we must fortress our thoughts the way the countries in ancient times fortified their cities.

Satan does everything in his power to eliminate right thinking. As we go into the study of thinking, we will come to the realization that every single thought is recorded in eternity. Every single thought you will have today is recorded in eternity.

Concentration for Victory

Then Paul declared, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."

As we take up these mighty weapons, we are able to cast down every imagination and high thing that exalts itself against categorical doctrine. Then, we bring into captivity each thought to the obedience of Jesus Christ; being ready to revenge all disobedience until our obedience is fulfilled.

Christians today seem to have trouble with having their thoughts controlled by God through

what we call the proper channels of thinking.* Believers must learn to concentrate and to have their thoughts transferred from channel A of the mind (the area of perception and awareness) to channel B (the human spirit) and down into channel C (the soul). From there, the products of these thoughts can be released through the body.

One of the most important things in the world is to have a thought-premise, a thought-process, and a thought-provision based in the truth of God's Word. A healthy thought life is consistently maintained by the human volition, which is the gift of God given to every person.

Casting Down Imaginations

What is an imagination?

An imagination (2 Corinthians 10:5) is like the photographic negative that has yet to be developed in the darkroom. It remains a "negative" or a shadow of what it is to become until it goes through the process of becoming a picture. Our imaginations are thoughts that are in their beginning stages, things that have not yet been fully developed and processed through our minds.

What Christ wants to do is to bring our minds to the place where we are equipped to

think with Him in every situation. More than just images or shadows of truth, He desires that our souls have the content of truth. With this content, we see Him as beautiful for every situation. We never accept defeat, and we learn to war with spiritual weaponry.

**Read The Hearing Heart by Pastor Stevens (Grace Publications, 1996).*

Chapter Two

FAITH AND PERCEPTION: THE POWER CONNECTION

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

Jesus Christ does not leave anything unfinished. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He always finishes His task, and right now Jesus Christ is in heaven making sure that we are becoming finished products on earth. He will stay with us until we have become the finished product.

I would never want to face Jesus Christ without straightening out my strongholds. There is no reason for God’s people to have anything but the most godly, qualified, tremendous, powerful, enriched strongholds in their souls.

Cleansed and Purged by the Word

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:1-3).

"That he might sanctify and cleanse [the church] with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26).

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13-14).

In John 15, Jesus said, "I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman." God the Father personally takes care of His garden. Everything in me that doesn't bear fruit, God purges. The areas that do bear fruit, the Lord arranges with His process of thinking so they will produce

more fruit.

Then, the Lord Jesus Christ says, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." We are made clean through the washing of the water of the Word—through a mental catharsis. This means that He has thoroughly purged our conscience until we are absolutely cleansed by the purging power of the Word and the Blood of Christ operating in our minds.

God's Strongholds

"So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119:130).

The first thing that God wants us to have is a tremendous understanding of God in our *perception* (our capacity for comprehension or discernment that begins in the receptive part of the mind, referred to as "channel A"). If there is anything that we need today, it is to have the strongholds of God in our perception. Once we have God's strongholds, through His promises and through fellowshiping with His Spirit, the next thing we need is to respond by faith to what we

perceive.

My faith will always equal my perception. If I am thinking with God, and I believe that God is love, God is forgiveness, and God is powerful, then my perception will grow and my faith will be elevated until my faith reflects and responds to my perception. I will see that He is the Lord and He is my Healer, and I will operate from that position.

Chapter Three

SPIRITUAL FRUIT: THE CULTIVATION OF GOD

“In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine.

“I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day” (Isaiah 27:2-3).

God says He will water His vineyard every moment. He did not say it is kept by the minute nor that it is kept by the second, but He keeps it every moment. Before you have a second, you have moments. God goes to work and begins to take care of us from His viewpoint with His love and mercy in the moments, before those moments even become a second.

Now the beautiful thing is that each of our lives is like a symphony that God is composing. God finishes His symphony, and our prayers are answered. God is in the business of perfecting everything He touches. That is where we stand

in positional truth.

In positional truth, the moment we are saved we *are* seated above. We *are* in union with Jesus Christ. The basis for our process of thinking is changed as we begin to think with the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). In that process, the Lord Jesus says, "If you are faithful to understand a premise for thinking, I will train you and teach you. I will teach you how to have a godly premise and a godly process. And I will teach you what you will become as the product of your own thinking."

Our actions will always reveal our thinking.

There is not a single thing today that I can do to improve myself. Perhaps I think I could become more spiritual, but I cannot improve upon what God has done. He that has begun a good work in you will perform it (see Philippians 1:6). God has a perfect plan for every believer, and that is revealed as He finishes the product.

The thing that I love about the promises of Scripture is that there is never a time when Jesus Christ would ever leave us or forsake us. There is never a time when He will not love us. There is never a time when He will love you or me less than He loves us today.

A person could be failing right now—God

forbid—but God’s love would be just exactly as great as it is when he is succeeding. (Please, don’t go out test Him on this one!)

Satan as an opposing force wants to gain control of our thinking. Part of the deception today in education and in various parts of our lives stems from a permissive society filled with self-centered thinking. The devil starts with the mind. First he attacks the goodness of God, and then he attacks the truthfulness of God. That is what he did in the garden with Eve. And the first thing he mentioned to Eve was “If God is so good, why is He withholding that tree from you?” She was dumbfounded.

He made sure that he did not say, “If God is so good, why is He withholding the nine trees?” He said, “There is one tree God will not let you have, because He is not a good God.”

Today the devil says, “If you would really get honest with yourself, you could see this. It is very simple. God withholds things that you deserve to have. He lets you see, but He withholds them.”

Do not believe that lie for one moment. Satan is the biggest liar ever. He is the father of all lies. But when God comes into the picture, we see the principle of the vineyard. Imagine grow-

ing up in a place where they grow tons and tons of grapes. The grape growers would arrange the vines so they would grow separately, supporting the vines so they could get maximum exposure to the sun. Within a year, these vines would produce a tremendous amount of grapes—more than you could even believe. They were all sweet and you could eat them right off the vines. In fact, those are the best kind of grapes.

The Lord Jesus Christ is ready for every single one of us to enter in and cause us to become very productive, just like those vines. He is ready to bring great fruit out of our lives.

How will He do it? By teaching us how to think with Him.

CONCLUSION

Grapevines exist simply to produce fruit. They have no value except to produce grapes. And the Holy Spirit of the living God has said to us in this message, "You have great value in producing God's thoughts in your mind, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, the grapes. Don't trample the tender shoots. Just receive God's life and begin to produce those grapes."

The Lord Jesus Christ will help us to do this, for He has said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." God the Father will be the caretaker of our lives. He will cultivate in us a great capacity to serve Him and to think with Him.

Let's be tremendous bearers of grapes during these days. The Lord has given us His Word so that we might think His thoughts. Let us be more ready to hear and more ready to receive His truth as we walk with Him.